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OO RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #0418/01 0831414
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 241414Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3354
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000418

DEPT FOR AF A A/S CARTER, SE GRATION, AF/SPG, AF/C, PRM
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND HUDSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: KALMA IDP LEADERS CONTINUE TO REFUSE HUMANITARIAN SERVICES

REF: A) KHARTOUM 410
B) KHARTOUM 409

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Humanitarian efforts in volatile Kalma IDP camp have ground to a halt as IDP leaders there have responded to the INGO expulsions by rebuffing UN efforts since March 21 to resume services. Unrealistically demanding the return of the expelled NGOs, along with refusing any Sudanese and Islamic charities, leaders have forced UNAMID representatives in Nyala to seek higher intervention with UNAMID HQ in El Fasher. Sources indicate camp sheikhs are meeting March 24 to ponder their options, but as the situation deteriorates, a UNDP effort to persuade them to accept UN agencies in the camp may bear fruit at the next scheduled meeting on March 26. CDA Fernandez implored a leading camp sheikh by phone on March 23 and 24 to agree to accept UN help. Meanwhile, the South Darfur HAC continues to demand that NGOs alleviate the GOS-caused emergency by implementing programs without properly signed technical agreements. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) A March 21 UNAMID team visit to Kalma IDP camp in South Darfur was unable to fully resolve the issue of humanitarian access, according to a UNAMID briefing on March 23. Admitting that the situation is worse than they initially believed, UN representatives described the situation as extremely tense, and said that the rapid deterioration of the situation was possible. Kalma sheikhs presented a series of political demands to the UN, including requiring statements of support regarding the ICC from all organizations that intend to work in the camp; a call for the return of NGOs expelled by the GOS; and a refusal to permit any Sudanese, Arab or Muslim NGOs to operate in the camp. Concluding the meeting, UNAMID Nyala referred the matter to UNAMID HQ in El Fasher for further input, and a UNAMID task force on Kalma camp, led by the Somali professor Abdi Hussein, will meet with the leaders on March 25 to continue the effort.

¶3. (SBU) Following the March 21 meeting, UNDP in Nyala has led an unofficial effort to negotiate with the obstinate Kalma sheikhs, and according to Aden Ali, head of UNDP in Nyala, their extreme opposition to even the UN's participation in the delivery of humanitarian aid has subsided over the last few days, leading Ali to expect a breakthrough at a meeting with IDP leaders in the March 25 meeting. "The mood in Kalma appears to be softening, but we are not celebrating yet," he told poloff on March 24. Using a team of paralegals resident in Kalma (trained by the International Rescue Committee before their expulsion earlier this month), UNDP has gone sector by sector to diplomatically persuade leaders that while their complaints are still valid, they cannot politicize the delivery of humanitarian aid without violating their obligations to Kalma's 90,000 plus residents. Already IDPs within the camp appear to be reacting to the lack of services, as Ali reported that 7,000 IDPs have moved to nearby Bileil camp, where the UN and NGOs have stationed extra food supplies and begun a meningitis vaccination campaign. CDA Fernandez called an intransigent Sheikh Ali, the

camp's most influential leader, on March 23 and 24 to urge an acceptance of the UN's help. Sheikh Ali was sympathetic to the USG, but had a long list of demands before he would consider changing the camp's tough stand.

¶4. (SBU) IDP leaders are split on the decision to allow humanitarian operations to resume in Kalma camp, according to Rashid Gaal, deputy country director of the UK-based NGO Merlin, who told poloff on March 24 that while a strong majority remain steadfast in their political opposition, they are starting to realize the consequences of living in a camp with no services. With the situation still volatile, NGOs and UN representatives did not travel to Kalma today, but Merlin, one of the NGOs which was not expelled, intends to begin operations there as soon as the situation permits. Gaal, whose March 20 visit to the camp was cut short after residents pelted him with stones, was cautiously optimistic that a breakthrough would be reached once the situation approached an untenable level. "The bottom line is, they have to accept aid in some form," he said. "But how long will this take? They are expecting the big shots from UNAMID to come to Kalma and be on camera, but they also know that it's not going to happen until they accept aid."

¶5. (SBU) Sources within Kalma camp indicate that as the humanitarian situation there deteriorates, IDP leaders are still refusing to allow GOS-aligned NGOs to operate, but may relent to permit the UN to resume humanitarian operations there. Tour Mohamed, a Nyala IDP representative with close ties in the camp, told poloff by telephone on March 24 that camp leaders are afraid GOS-affiliated NGOs will undermine security in the camp, and camp sheikhs are planning to welcome UN operations in the camp, as water sources are almost completely empty. Adam Mohamedein, a Fur leader within Kalma camp, told emboff by telephone on March 24 that the situation was

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"severe," and camp leaders are now holding internal meetings to determine if they will permit the UN to access the camp. Adamant that they will not accept aid from local NGOs or Arab countries, Mohamedein said local NGOs and Arab charities could act to undermine security in the camp and carry out the GOS's ultimate wishes of evacuating the camp.

¶6. (SBU) The GOS's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) continues to retard the humanitarian effort of the UN and the NGOs that remain in Darfur, according to the UNDP's Aden Ali and Rashid Gaal of Merlin. Technical agreements between the GOS and NGOs remain unsigned while the HAC still requests that INGOs fill the gap in HAC-assigned locations and according to HAC's priorities. Gaal said that while Merlin has signed a technical agreement with HAC in Khartoum, the South Darfur HAC has not yet moved on Merlin's paperwork. According to Aden Ali, the GOS has instituted new flight regulations in Darfur, requiring all humanitarian flights to submit an obsessively detailed inventory before takeoff, and has also instituted new banking restrictions limiting monthly withdrawal for individuals from local banks to 3,000 Euros. (Note: These foreign exchange restrictions likely are part of a broader tightening of regulations intended to counter a critical shortage of FX nation-wide, rather than being aimed at the NGOs in particular. End note.)

¶7. (SBU) Comment: While it may always be amateur hour in the offices of the GOS in South Darfur, the Kalma sheikhs have shown that they mean business and are not afraid to sacrifice humanitarian delivery to make a strong political statement. UNAMID still is scrambling to resolve the standoff, but a high-level political effort, along with lower-level moves to reach out to individual sectors, may pay off this week as Kalma residents feel the pain imposed on them by the wrong-headed GOS decision and their leaders' natural political reaction to the regime's cruelty. It is ironic that a small team of less than 50 paralegals trained by the IRC may actually save the GOS from a humanitarian catastrophe in Kalma camp. Should UNAMID avert this crisis this week, the political will of Kalma camp will have been strengthened, but a brutal and arrogant GOS may remain oblivious to how big a bullet they just dodged.

FERNANDEZ